

note the "points of interest" in 1887. They were almost the works of man being repetitive houses and small sailboats still an unexplored wilderness against white intrusion by the very mindful of repeated evictions unscrupulous white settlers. Cutler was still the haunt of Indian Creek was a desolate track and crocodile, a dozen or more visible at once. The Miami River stream, with four or five miles length. There was no Coral Gables race track, no golf course, no fruit grove, nor even the suggestion was not a mile of road anywhere being the only highway. and no Indian encampment frequently made camp on the shores at Coconut Grove for a drop of gasoline in the folds interests of the present. a few of the keys remain as forty years made a more where.

apparent that the Bay could try for a yacht race, and it was Washington's Birthday with an even responses to the notices and up and made a start, the classes. It was a success in getting Ada, Captain Brickell and Edna, Captain Addison, Charles Peacock were time-keepers all hands, about fifty in a good dinner at Peacock's.

given the promoters. Thus began organized aquatic sports on the Bay, the Washington's Birthday regatta afterward being a fixture of the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club, until the displacement of sails by gasoline in general interest caused it to degenerate into a "chowder-party."

The Club had its origin a little later that spring, one day at Peacock's; Kirk Munroe broached the subject, and we at once organized, he electing me commodore, and I doing the same for him as secretary. This friendly arrangement lasted without interruption until 1909, when I declined renomination, my health being poor, and the club having transferred most of its activities to Miami. Kirk continued as secretary until 1922. I designed the club flag, bearing the emblem of a large "N" interlaced with the figures "25" signifying twenty-five degrees north latitude, since we were the most southern club in the country. Mariners abbreviate this to 25 N, but as mariners are not very common among yachtsmen the flag device has almost always had to be explained, and therefore is not entirely a success!

For many years the club membership was limited to fifty, then to one hundred, all active yachtsmen interested in the Bay, and many famous names appeared upon the roster. Headquarters for some time were in the second floor of my boathouse, built in the summer of 1886. By 1901 more room was needed and a comfortable clubhouse was erected on piling in front of the Factory, the site being given the club on condition that they maintain the wharf for general use. When the railroad came and Miami grew, Mr. Flagler¹ was anxious to give the club a fine house in the new city in return for the dignity of its name, age and associations. Many members still felt, however, that it was a Coconut Grove affair, so a com-

¹Henry M. Flagler, of Standard Oil, whose millions, genius and love of Florida transformed its East Coast, by railroad and hotel-building, from a wilderness to the American winter playground.

3939 HARDEE RD.

MUNROE, RALPH E. VINCENT GILPIN;

THE COMMODORE'S STORY

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promise was effected, whereby the club built a second house at Miami, with Mr. Flagler's help, but retained the old house at the Grove as headquarters. For some time meetings were held in both houses, in alternate months. About 1903 Camp Biscayne was started on the land back of the clubhouse, and when it became advisable to sell this property, in 1925, the club's interests had come to center largely in Miami, and it did not care to move the house. Thus abandoned, it found a stepfather in Bob Erwin, a local contractor, who bought it for one dollar, in April, 1926, slid the 40 x 25 foot, two-story structure bodily onto a barge, and towed it up one of the canals into the outskirts of Coral Gables, where it is now disguised as a residence.

So passed the winter of 1886-7 — the first in which a distinctively "winter colony" was an important element in the affairs of the Bay. Every member of this group became permanently interested in the region, and a number of them are now "prominent residents." From this time on, progressively, the development of winter homes and tourists' interests became the great work of the region. Steam communication was soon brought a step nearer by the excellent service of the Indian River Steamboat Company from the railroad at Titusville, which was extended to Lake Worth points by the narrow-gauge line from Jupiter to Juno and the small steamer *Lake Worth*. Palm Beach, with the Coconut Grove House, built by "Cap" (E. N.) Dimmick, soon outstripped the other Lake resorts and became the winter headquarters of a growing company of enthusiasts.

Travel to the Bay, however, was not affected, and the sixty miles of coast to Lake Worth remained as primitively desolate as ever until the railroad came through in 1896.

The summer of 1887 was quiet. In the fall the Hines and I went down as usual by Key West, accompanied by my friend George B. Davis, fitted out *Pelican* and *Egre* and the winter passed with few events worthy of record.



THIS small group at Peacock Inn included ev
FIRST CHRISTMAS PARTY,



FIRST REGATTA OF BISCAYNE BAY Y
WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY, 18

COMMODORE'S STORY

in company, manned by the Hines and had already shared some of my adventures. One incident comes back to me as an incident of his present dignities as a noted railroad consultant, high in the confidence of the government from his leading work in the World War, and of the longshoremen's strike in New Bedford. His noteworthy career included many years of railroad development and reorganization all over the world. He had an inordinate appetite for food, and shortly after his graduation from the Naval Academy, he came down the Sound together, sadly lacking in provisions. New Bedford gave him a chance to land, and he did so thoroughly, returning to the wharf where we had landed with a large quantity of a dozen or more assorted pies. He carried them off with care, and made joyful comments on the trip. At last, for once, he was going to have a cruise!

It was very dark and much encumbered with cargo, and as I was feeling my way through the darkness to locate the dinghy I heard a stum-ble behind me. Turning hastily, I found that I had fallen into a try-pot — a huge iron kettle filled with barrels — which was half full of scummy, rancid remnants of whale-oil. Alas for me, I was catapulted into the heart of this un-pleasant mess, and alas for Fred, who at least partially

was confused by the sounds of struggle and perturbation. Fred emerged, wet, plastered with foul oil, and clutching in despairing hands the ragged remains of his precious pies! There was an ominous silence, and then there arose on the old New Bedford wharf the choicest and most selection of plain and fancy profanity that the English could be expected to accumulate.



THE "25-N" FLAG FIRST HOISTED, 1887



BISCAYNE BAY YACHT CLUB, 1901

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3939 HARDIE